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FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6897
INFO RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 8493
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 2222
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 9727
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1776
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0694
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0725
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 1338
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY 0005

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 000632

NOFORN
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/PB AND SCA/FO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/10/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [KDEM](#) [KCOR](#) [ASEC](#) [OVIP](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: HASINA RELEASED FROM PRISON, SET TO FLY TO THE
STATES JUNE 12

REF: A. DHAKA 608
[1](#)B. DHAKA 609
[1](#)C. DHAKA 622
[1](#)D. DHAKA 628
[1](#)E. DHAKA 631

Classified By: DCM Geeta Pasi, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) June 11 released former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from prison "temporarily" until August 6. In its release order, the GOB cited a medical board's finding that Hasina required medical treatment abroad as the reason for her parole. Media and other sources claimed the GOB placed conditions on her release, the main one being the Awami League agree to participate in political dialogue with the Caretaker Government. Hasina has returned to her home in Dhaka, where she will meet with Awami League leaders and with a group of Advisers from the Caretaker Government. She is set to depart Dhaka June 12 for Boston, where her son resides. Jubilant crowds of supporters greeted Hasina outside the jail and her home. The Embassy held an Emergency Action Committee meeting to review its security posture given the crowds, resulting traffic congestion and potential for shifts in crowd dynamics. Meanwhile, speculation continues about the fate of Hasina's rival, Khaleda Zia, and her sons.

A SMILING HASINA DEPARTS JAIL

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Former Prime Minister and leader of the Awami League, Sheikh Hasina waved to crowds of supporters outside the sub-jail on the grounds of Parliament, following her release Wednesday afternoon local time. The GOB notice authorizing her release cited a medical board recommendation that she be allowed to travel abroad for medical treatment as the reason for granting her temporary parole. Her parole is currently valid for eight weeks, until August 6. In reporting her release, the media listed conditions to which she allegedly agreed in order to be released, including not engaging in political or business activities, refraining from anti-government statements and reporting weekly to the GOB on the condition of her health. The official notice granting her parole did not list any of these conditions, and sources close to the negotiations have told us the main condition of her release was her party's participation in a dialogue with

the Caretaker Government (CTG) about the path to elections in December and the transition to a democratically-elected government. Niaz Ahmed, who has personal connections to Hasina and one of the CTG Advisers and will travel with Hasina to the States, said the CTG hoped to limit her exposure -- at least initially -- to the media and others who might encourage to change her commitment to dialogue (Ref D).

¶3. (C) Following her release, Hasina paid homage at the home - now a museum - where her father, Bangladesh's founding father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and her family were assassinated in 1975. She then proceeded to her Dhaka residence, where she was expected to meet with key Awami League leaders Wednesday evening local time. The media reported that she would then meet with CTG Advisers participating in the political dialogue with Bangladesh's political parties. Police reported to RSO that Hasina would stop at her father's grave en route to the airport the morning of June 12. She is set to travel to Boston, via London, on British Airways. Ahmed told Acting Pol/Econ Chief that Hasina's sister, Sheikh Rehana, and her children would meet Hasina during the brief layover in London, which is where Rehana resides. Hasina's son, Sajeeb Wazed Joy, will meet Hasina on her arrival in Boston, where he is a student at Harvard University. In addition to visiting her son in Boston and seeking medical treatment, Hasina is likely to visit her daughter in Toronto.

PEACEFUL CROWDS, BUT EMBASSY REVIEWS SECURITY

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¶4. (SBU) Hundreds of supporters crowded outside the jail and Hasina's Dhaka home. While so far the crowds have been peaceful and have expressed jubilation at Hasina's release, authorities dispersed additional police for crowd control. Following an Emergency Action Committee meeting (Ref E), Mission management decided to delay the opening of the American Center on June 12 when it learned of Hasina's planned stop at her father's gravesite, which is located close to the American Center.

COMMENT

¶5. (C) Barring any last minute changes, it appears that pragmatists in the Caretaker Government have won out over hardliners who did not want to deal with either of the two ladies. As news filtered out that Hasina's release was imminent, Awami League officials said publicly they would participate in the December elections and would follow Hasina's lead with regard to participating in dialogue with the CTG. The Awami League's main rival, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has been quiet today. There is much speculation about how Hasina's release will affect discussions on the fates of former Prime Minister and BNP leader Khaleda Zia and her two sons, Arafat (Koko) and Tarique Rahman. There is also speculation that Arafat Rahman's poor health would lead to his departure from Bangladesh, in a fashion similar to Hasina's.
Moriarty